

March 25, 2003

Chief, Standardization Branch  
Livestock and Seed Program  
AMS, USDA, Room 2603-S, Stop 0254  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250-0254

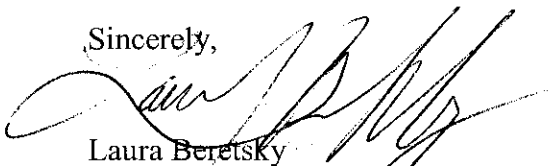
Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing in response to Docket Number LS-02-02 concerning Meat Marketing Claims, to express my concerns about the proposed meat marketing labeling claims and standards. I am concerned that the standards outlined in the proposed labeling claims will undermine the integrity of the labels it seeks to define, mislead consumers, and have a devastating affect on small and mid-sized farmers who are truly trying to market free-range, antibiotic free products. In light of these concerns, I am writing to ask that you take the following steps:

- Withdraw the proposed meat marketing claims and standards and start over again, this time closely consulting with family farm, consumer, humane, and environmental organizations before issuing a final proposal;
- Draft claims and standards that will ensure that consumers are able to purchase meat that is truly grass-fed, free-range, and antibiotic free;
- Ensure that the label claim for "grass-fed" does not have any loopholes for producers who want to market their livestock as grass-fed when in fact the animal is receiving grain supplements for a large percentage of their production cycle;
- Clarify the definitions of the label claims for "free-range", "free-roaming" and "pasture-raised," so that consumers can be confident that the when they buy meat with such labels, the livestock will have had continuous and unconfined access to pasture throughout their lifecycles.

As a consumer who only purchases meat that is antibiotic free, free-range, and organic, I am deeply concerned that the integrity of this labeling remains intact. Please take all steps necessary to ensure that this is the case. Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



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